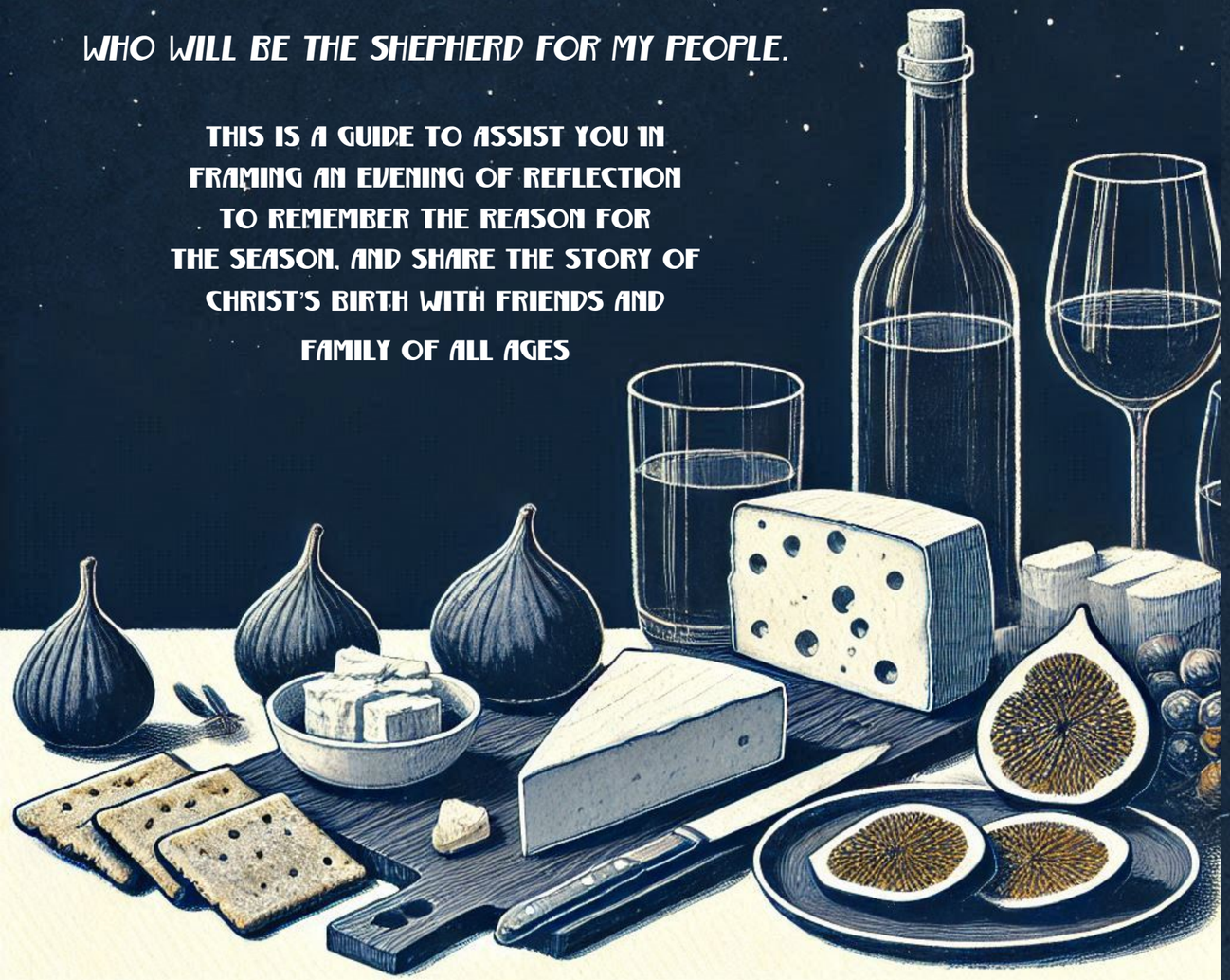
TONIGHT WE CELEBRATE WHAT WAS FORETOLD BY THE PROPHETS:

"A RULER WILL COME FROM BETHLEHEM,
WHO WILL BE THE SHEPHERD FOR MY PEOPLE.

THIS IS A GUIDE TO ASSIST YOU IN FRAMING AN EVENING OF REFLECTION TO REMEMBER THE REASON FOR THE SEASON, AND SHARE THE STORY OF CHRIST'S BIRTH WITH FRIENDS AND FAMILY OF ALL AGES



THE SHEPHERD'S MEAL

AN INTERACTIVE CHRISTMAS TRADITION STORY BOOK

COMPILED BY M. A. BLISS

THE SHEPHERD'S MEAL IS A CHRISTMAS FAMILY TRADITION OF TELLING THE STORY OF LUKE CHAPTER 2 TO FRIENDS AND FAMILY WHILE SHARING A SIMPLE MEAL UNDER THE WARM GLOW OF CANDLELIGHT. THE PURPOSE IS TO REFLECT ON THE NIGHT OUR SAVIOR JESUS WAS BORN, AND IMAGINING BEING ONE OF THE SHEPHERDS THAT GOD'S ANGELS MET ON THE HILLSIDE THAT NIGHT.

THIS BOOK BEGINS WITH AN ADAPTED SUMMARY OF THE GOSPEL OF LUKE CHAPTER 2, WRITTEN FOR AGES 2-12. THE LAST FEW PAGES ARE SOME COMMON IDEAS TO INCORPORATE INTO YOUR OWN SHEPHERD'S MEAL, BUT YOU ARE ALWAYS ENCOURAGED TO THINK OF AND INCORPORATE YOUR OWN RITUALS, TRADITIONS, AND ADAPTATIONS. THERE IS NO UNIVERSAL "SHEPHERD'S MEAL" AS WITH PASSOVER, BUT THIS BOOKLET CAN SERVE AS A GUIDE TO GET YOU STARTED.

ONE QUIET NIGHT, LONG AGO,
SOME SHEPHERDS WERE WATCHING THEIR
SHEEP ON A HILLSIDE. THE STARS SPARKLED
ABOVE AS THE SHEEP GRAZED AND RESTED.

LUKE 2:8-20 SUMMARIZED

SUDDENLY.
A BIGHT LIGHT FILLED THE
NIGHT SKY.

IT WAS AN ANGEL.
GLOWING WITH GOD'S LIGHT.
THE SHEPHERDS WERE
AFRAID. THEY HAD NEVER
SEEN A REAL ANGEL.

DO NOT BE AFRAID!
I HAVE GOOD NEWS!
TONIGHT, A SPECIAL BABY HAS BEEN
BORN IN BETHLEHEM.
HE IS THE SAVIOR, CHRIST THE LORD!

YOU WILL FIND HIM WRAPPED
IN SWADDLING CLOTHES,
LAYING IN A MANGER.
YOU MAY TAKE A MOMENT TO SING A VERSE OR TWO OF "FIRST NOEL" FOUND IN THE BACK OF THIS BOOK

THEN THE SKY FILLED WITH MORE ANGELS!
A GREAT NOISE ERUPTED AND THEY SANG :

" GLORY TO GOD IN THE HIGHEST,
AND PEACE ON EARTH TO EVERYONE! "

THE SHEPHERDS HURRIED OFF TO BETHLEHEM TO SEE
THE NEWBORN BABY

JUST AS THE ANGEL SAID.
THEY FOUND THE CHILD IN A STABLE. WHERE
THEY MET MARY. JOSEPH. AND BABY JESUS

THEY KNELT DOWN AND WORSHIPPED. THEY KNEW THIS BABY WAS GOD'S SON. SENT TO CARE FOR HIS PEOPLE— JUST LIKE A SHEPHERD CARES FOR HIS SHEEP.

"THIS BABY WILL BE THE GREAT SHEPHERD. LEADING AND LOVING EVERYONE WHO FOLLOWS HIM."

THE SHEPHERDS RETURNED TO THEIR HOMES, AND WERE SO THANKFUL THAT GOD LET THEM SEE THE MESSIAH, THE GREAT SHEPHERD.

THEY SHARED THE GOOD NEWS OF CHRIST'S BIRTH TO EVERYONE WHO WOULD LISTEN.

MEAL IDEAS/SUGGESTIONS

THERE IS NO WRONG WAY TO PREPARE A SHEPHERD'S MEAL. THE THEME HOWEVER SHOULD BE COMMUNAL, SIMPLE, AND MINIMALIST, AS THE FOCUS OF THE MEAL IS TO DISCUSS THE STORY OF CHRIST'S BIRTH, NOT THE MEAL ITSELF. AS THE PURPOSE IS TO PUT YOURSELF IN THE SHOES OF SHEPHERDS OF THE TIME OF JESUS, IT IS CUSTOMARY TO EAT BY CANDLELIGHT. WE LIKE THE MEDITERRANEAN DIET AND WILL PUT OUT FOOD FOUND COMMON IN BETHLEHEM AND SURROUNDING REGIONS, AS WELL AS OTHER FOODS WE RARELY GET TO TRY.

HERE IS A LIST OF FOODS AS WELL AS BIBLE PASSAGE PROMPTS FOR DISCUSSION AS YOU ARE EATING.
I ENCOURAGE YOU TO SPEND YOUR OWN TIME PREPARING DISCUSSION TOPICS RELEVANT TO THOSE IN YOUR GATHERING.

BREAD — JOHN 6:35

GRAPES/GRAPE JUICE/WINE — JOHN 15:5

FRUIT — MATTHEW 7:16-17

MILK/CHEESE (ESPECIALLY GOAT CHEESE!) — 1 PETER 2:2-3

FIGS/FIG COOKIES — MARK 11:12-14

SALT/SALTY FOODS — MATTHEW 5:13

OLIVES/OIL — CRACKERS — MEATS — HONEY —

SPREADS/HUMMUS — NAAN/PITA — VEGGIES

WHAT OTHER BIBLE PASSAGES MENTIONING
FOOD COULD YOU INCORPORATE?

This is a guide, i hope you share, adapt, and make it your own. This particular book is not sold for profit, just covers the cost of printing material. I will not copyright any of it, nor claim rights to it, so you can do with it whatever you want, as long as it brings glory to God.

THE FIRST NOEL THE ANGEL DID SAY
WAS TO CERTAIN POOR SHEPHERDS
IN FIELDS AS THEY LAY

IN FIELDS WHERE THEY
LAY KEEPING THEIR SHEEP
ON A COLD WINTER'S NIGHT
THAT WAS SO DEEP

NOEL, NOEL, NOEL, NOEL
BORN IS THE KING OF ISRAEL!

PUBLIC DOMAIN: CHRISTMAS CAROLS, ANCIENT AND MODERN, BY WILLIAM SANDYS (LONDON: RICHARD BECKLEY, 1833)